

# Transformational Experience

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*Below is an outline of a talk that I gave at MLUUC in February of 2011. It is the only talk given there that was not put into a narrative prior to presentation.*

## I. *Introduction (Living Deeply)*

A. "...a change in the way you see the world and a shift in how you see yourself. It's not simply a change in your point of view, but rather a whole different perception of what's possible." **A transformation in consciousness.**

1. Consciousness is the **context** in which your beliefs, experiences, feelings and thoughts converge
2. Your consciousness determines **how** you experience the world

## B. *Transformational Experiences (TE)*

1. TEs are often **gradual** though they can, like **peak** experiences, be **sudden** and take one by surprise
2. A TE is distinguished from a peak experience by **long term impact**
3. A TE is not only a shift in **perception** but in **attention**
4. TEs aren't necessarily **joyful** experiences
5. They can be in the words of Zorba the Greek "the full **catastrophe**."

## II. Hidden Meanings in Experience

### A. Objects and Events as Symbols

1. The meaning within objects and events are a language
2. Any given gestalt of objects and events is similar to a message
3. Like an illiterate we are generally unable to "read" the message

4. Often through a TE a message is revealed to us
- B. Two singular examples of symbolic meaning:
  1. Man who walked through the valley of death unscathed - Grace
  2. Abandoned and starving hound - Betrayal
  3. Often our illnesses and traumas are symbolic messages
- III. Personal TEs
  - A. Automobile accident (two-by-four)
    1. A socially anxious, hostile and underachieving youth meets catastrophe
      - a. Precognitive element
      - b. Life threatening and disfiguring
      - c. Picture comparison (sadness then an epiphany - getting the message)
      - d. The past is not a constraint on the future
      - e. One can radically redefine oneself at any time
      - d. A process unfolding in time decision by decision
    2. A solitary and reflective walk ten plus years later (surprise)
      - a. Neighborhood walk on a cold winter day
      - b. Attention to the gestalt of houses, streets, cars, people
      - c. An awareness of being embedded in this context
      - d. Revelation - getting the bigger message.
    3. Outlaw - a poetic attempt to capture the sense of the revelation

## Outlaw

An outlaw is a man  
A man made whole  
Born in quiet and solitude  
The quiet of aloneness.

Wind, cold and desolate  
Heralds his birth  
And being  
Eyes like polished glass  
Opening on everything  
Nothing.

His flesh shivers, then accepts  
The coldness passes  
It was only a fleeting thought  
Set aside now  
Forgotten.

His life pulses in rhythm  
Time is a schedule  
Life a continuum  
To the man  
All is simple, clear  
To live.

The flesh of God  
Lies within him  
Transforming  
Its essence absorbed  
Flowing through his veins  
Cleansing.

Bursting into his brain  
Lifting a thousand shades  
Clearing binding webs  
Webs like steel girders  
Weighing upon the mind  
Suppressing the man.

And the man knew God  
And he was made free  
All history and tradition  
Culture and words  
Rescinded -- Grace.

Freedom from the past  
And from the future  
An outlaw.

God moved through him  
And he was God  
He was neither good nor evil  
Nor right or wrong.

And the man moved  
With the world and of it  
But, not through it  
For he knew not  
The world, nor man  
Being both.

And yet, something else.

#### IV. Invitation for Congregational Participation

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